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Taiwan Lifts Longstanding Ban on U.S. Long Grain Rice and Schedules Tender

Report Categories:

Grain and Feed

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Report Highlights:

Taiwan authorities recently lifted a ban on U.S. long grain rice, in place since 2006. Council of Agriculture authorities scheduled a tender of 3,000 MT of U.S. long grain brown rice for December 10.

General Information:

During the week of November 24, the American Institute in Taiwan's Agricultural Affairs Office learned that Taiwan authorities lifted the longstanding ban on U.S. long grain rice. Taiwan imposed an import ban on U.S. long grain rice immediate after the LibertyLink incident, summer 2006. The issue was raised in several bilateral engagements, both technically and under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement annual meetings.

Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency scheduled two tenders of U.S.-origin long grain for December 10. This will be the first U.S. long grain rice tender since Taiwan opened their market for rice imports in January 2002 with their World Trade Organization (WTO) accession. Taiwan rice purchases are primarily California-origin. High California rice prices concern importers and authorities, and are likely an impetus for the lifting of the long grain ban. The December 10 tender information is as follows with quality specifications attached:

- GF4-103-118 for 1,500 MT of U.S.-origin long grain brown rice with amylose content greater than or equal to 24% for delivery May 1-June 30, 2015
- GF4-103-119 for 1,500 MT of U.S.-origin long grain brown rice for delivery May 1-June 30, 2015.

Long grain rice with higher amylose content is suitable for making popular local products such as rice noodles and radish cakes. While demand is high, cost constrains consumption as prices for substitute starches, such as corn, are lower. Recently, several popular brands of rice noodles were found to contain no rice ingredients. At the urging of consumers, Taiwan authorities established national standards for rice noodles under which product must be made of at least 50% of rice to be labeled, "rice noodle." Long grain rice without amylose content specifications will likely be used as table rice. Reportedly, consumers' appetites are changing to accept longer grain product in addition to the Japanese-style medium or short grain.

Tender specifications for U.S.-origin long grain brown rice

Type and Quality Specification of Imported Long Grain Brown Rice

Type:

1. Long grain brown rice
2. Length of kernel: 6.61 mm~7.5mm, the ratio of length to width of whole kernel: ≥ 3.0 .

Method of test for length and shape: randomly sample 30 kernels from sound kernels, measure the length and width of each kernels, then take the average of the measurement. The weight percentage of out of length standard kernels must be under 30% and the kernels which length less than 6.2mm must be under 5%.

3. Amylose content: $\geq 24\%$ (for Tender GF4-103-118 only)

Quality Specifications:

Maximum Limit											Minimum Limit
Moisture	Impurity	Broken kernels	Damaged kernels	Heat damaged kernels	Sprouted kernels	Immature kernels, include rice screening	Chalky kernels	Off-type kernels	Paddy	Well-milled kernels	Degree of freshness (PH value)
14.5%	0.3%	6%	3	0.3	0.8	Total not to exceed 13%		3%	0.4%	0%	6.7

Notes:

1. Product shall not contain insect, insect eggs or residues, and the characteristic should meet the sanitary standards for general foods which were announced by the department of Health.
2. The characteristic of appearance should be in accord with that of original sample or be even better.

Definitions:

Characteristic of appearance: Thickness of bran, the shape of kernel, color, luster, gloss, fullness, even distribution, hardness, damaged, chalky, etc.

Impurities: The materials which pass through 1.7 mm sieve or which remain on the sieve other than rice kernels.

Broken kernels: Kernels of rice which are more than one-fourth and less than three-fourth of the average length of 30 kernels.

Damaged kernels: Whole or broken kernels of rice which are distinctly damaged and deteriorated by moist, fungus and insect, or any other reasons. Include fungus and insect damaged kernels, fissure and cracked kernels, abnormal kernels, rusty kernels etc., exclude heat damaged kernels.

Heat damaged kernels: Whole or broken kernels of rice which are discolored to yellow or darker owing to by microbiological heating.

Sprouted kernels: Kernels start sprouting or have the trail. Include rotten-germ kernels.

Immature kernels (include Rice screening): Kernels which are unripe and/or undeveloped.

Off-type kernels: Kernels which are not the designated type.

Chalky kernels: Whole or broken kernels of rice which are one-half or more chalky.